

Visual Literacy – Metalanguage

Happenings	
Actions and settings – how the page represents people, objects and events, including speech and thought	Who is depicted on the page? How do the characters interact? What are the characters doing? Where is this scene set? What objects are present? How do the characters interact with the setting?
Affective Response, Mood	How does the scene make you feel? How do you react to the scene when you first see it? After reflection and analysis of the scene, how does it make you feel? Describe the mood of the scene and its characters. What makes you say that? How does the mood of the scene relate to other scenes in the book?
Semiotics	
Conceptual – images showing ideas and conceptual themes	What is the main idea of this scene? How does this scene move the story forward?
Symbolic – items in the image that have a meaning on their own, symbols or signs, items with particular cultural meanings e.g. a white dove.	Are there symbols or signs visible in the image? Are their items that have a meaning on their own, outside of the picture? How are these items used in the scene? What meaning do they add to the scene?
Juxtaposition - placement of items with contrasting meanings	Are there items in the scene that are out of place? Are there items in the scene that are hard to explain?
Appropriation - meaning derived from an item's history or prior association, cultural appropriation	What objects in the scene do you recognise? What do these object mean to you? What memories or associations do they recall? What do these objects mean in this scene? Is the author inviting you to make associations?
Textual Meaning – The role played by text in adding meaning to the scene	How is text used to add meaning to the scene? What role is played by the text? Does the text add to or alter your response to the image?
Reacting and Relating	
Shot distance – long, mid or close	Shot distance refers to the distance of an imagined camera from the scene. The greater the distance the more you see but in less detail. Long shots are used to set a scene and include surrounding details Mid Shots – focus attention on one or two characters Close Shots – focus attention on one aspect of the scene, used to force you to notice a specific detail. How has the shot been framed? What is the effect of this framing?
Angle – high, low or eye level	Angle refers to the vertical placement of an imagined camera relative to the important elements in the scene. High angles make the observed people or objects seem small or overpowered by the viewer. Often used to show a dominant characters perspective. Low Angles make the observed people or objects seem large and important or powerful. Eye level is used to establish a neutral or natural view. How has the shot been framed? What it the effect of this framing?

Focus - use of focus to draw attention, out of focus areas and bokeh (<i>parts of a photo that are hidden by out-of-focus distortion</i>) to distract attention	Does the scene use in-focus and out of focus areas to direct your attention? How has focus been used?
Gaze of characters – offers and demands	Where are the characters looking? (angle, direction, distance, off scene) What are they looking at? (Can it be seen?) Are they demanding your attention on them or offering you to look elsewhere, to follow their gaze?
Colours – moods and symbolism, saturation	What colour do you first notice? What colour holds your attention? What colours have been used? How has colour been used to convey meaning?
Shapes and textures and their impact	What shapes and textures do you first notice? Which shapes and textures hold your attention? What shapes and textures have been used? How has shape and texture been used to convey meaning?
Realism of images – photo, artwork, drawings, diagrams	How real is the image? – photograph, photorealistic, drawing/sketch, cartoon, abstract
Contrast - difference between light and dark, point of highest contrast	Where is the point of greatest contrast? How much contrast is in the scene? How has contrast been used?
Perspective and Scale - natural or distorted perspective, depth of image, flattened perspective	Perspective can be adjusted to make distant objects seem closer, close objects seem large, towering objects lean towards the viewer or away, to stretch distance to extremes. How has perspective been used to convey meaning? Is the scene large or small? How has scale been used to convey meaning?
Design & Layout	
Balance – symmetry and contrast of elements	Is the scene balanced or unbalanced? How has balance been used to convey meaning? <i>Balanced scenes can be less demanding, scenes without balance can build tension.</i>
Top/bottom, left/right, centre/margin – placement of elements	Where within the frame are objects placed relative to the edges?
Salience – what attracts attention	What object or part of an object do you first look at? What object or part of an object holds your attention? How has salience been used to convey meaning?
Reading paths – vectors directing our gaze	Where does your gaze first fall on the image? Where does your gaze go next? Describe the path your gaze takes as you explore the image? How has the author controlled the path of your gaze?
Framing – how text and image may frame each other; image cropping	What shape is the scene? (Square, rectangular, long, thin, tall, etc) What effect has this framing had? Has the author used borders or a framed page layout? How has the framing of elements across the page been used to convey meaning?
High Key/Low Key - images that are predominantly bright(high) or dark (low)	Is the image High Key, Low Key or neutral? How has the authors choice impacted the scene?
Text Layout and Font – the visual integration of text with the image	What choices have been made regarding font, colour, shape, etc. for text elements? Is the text within the frame of the image? Does the choice of font suit the image? How does the text interact with the image? Is the text presented within speech/thought bubbles or call-out frames? If so is this effective?

Critical	
Reflecting on the text or image as a whole.	How effective is the text as a piece of literature? What is the message of the text? How effective is the text in communicating its message? What audience is the text aimed at? How effectively does it communicate with that audience?
Comparative Analysis – comparing the text or image with others	How does the text compare to similar texts? How does this text compare to others by the same author?
Meta-analysis – beyond the text. Evaluating the texts place within literature	How important is this text as an example of visual literacy? What does this text contribute to literature? What is the value of this text?